

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 INR-05 INRE-00 CIAE-00

NSAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 NSCE-00 IO-06 SCS-01 CA-01

A-01 OPR-01 SY-02 EB-04 OC-01 CCO-00 HA-02 FS-01

MMO-01 EUR-08 ACDA-10 TRSE-00 OMB-01 L-01 H-01

PA-01 ICAE-00 SP-02 /072 W

-----113639 161545Z /45

O 161445Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9722

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 4852

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINS, CG, CASC

SUBJECT: SHABA ATTACK: SAFETY OF AMERICANS AT KOLWEZI

REF: A. CUTLER/JUNIOR TELECON MAY 15

1. SINCE EARLY MORNING MAY 16, FAZ HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING COUNTER-ATTACK INCLUDING PARA DROP AT KOLWEZI. APPARENT PLAN IS TO SECURE CP, THEN AIRPORT, AND PROCEED TO MOP-UP REBELS ELSEWHERE IN CITY. AS OF MID-DAY, GOZ WAS WAXING CONFIDENT ABOUT SUCCESS OF THIS OPERATION. IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION MOBUTU ASSURED ME THINGS WERE GOING WELL, THAT KATANGANS WERE FLEEING, AND THAT HE EXPECTED EUROPEANS COULD BE EVACUATED IN FULL SAFETY BY MAY 17.

2. I HAVE JUST MET WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR AND BELGIAN CHARGE. THEY SHARE MY DEEP CONCERN THAT THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR ZAIRIAN FRIENDS MAY BE ILL FOUNDED. THEY BELIEVE THAT NUMBER OF FAZ  
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TROOPS NOW IN ACTION OR IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE IS TOTALLY INADEQUATE TO SECURE THE CITY AND THAT OPERATION COULD TURN INTO DEBACLE. EVEN IF PRIMARY OBJECTIVES QUICKLY TAKEN, THEY FEAR THAT IT COULD BE DAYS BEFORE EXPATRIATES ARE MADE SAFE AND THAT IN MEANTIME THREAT TO THEIR SAFETY FROM REBELS HOLED UP IN RESIDENTIAL QUARTER COULD INCREASE. OUR CONTACTS WITH BELGIAN AND FRENCH MILITARY ADVISERS

INDICATE THAT, FROM PURELY MILITARY STANDPOINT, THEY SHARE THE DOUBTS OF THEIR PRINCIPALS CONCERNING FAZ CAPABILITY TO CARRY OFF THIS DELICATE OPERATION.

3. AS REPORTED REF TELECON, BELGIAN CHARGE HAS RECOMMENDED TO HIS GOVERNMENT THAT PLANS BE IMMEDIATELY DEVELOPED FOR MILITARY INTERVENTION TO ASSURE SAFETY AND EVACUATION OF EXPATRIATES AT KOLWEZI. FRENCH AMBASSADOR, WHO UNTIL TODAY WAS LESS FAVORABLE TOWARD THIS OPTION, NOW FULLY SHARES BELGIAN'S VIEW. BOTH ARE EXTREMELY ALARMED BY REPORTS OF REBEL INDISCIPLINE WHICH HAS ALREADY RESULTED IN AT LEAST SEVEN EUROPEAN DEATHS. WHEREAS BELGIANS AND FRENCH AD ORIGINALLY THOUGHT IN TERMS OF TRYING TO NEGOTIATE SAFETY OF EUROPEANS WITH REBEL LEADERS, UGLY CHANGES IN LATTERS' DEMEANOR LEAD THEM TO CONCLUDE THAT ANY SUCH NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE MEANINGLESS. WHILE NEITHER OF MY COLLEAGUES HAS DEVELOPED ANY PRECISE IDEAS AS TO HOW RESCUE OPERATION WOULD BE MOUNTED, BOTH AGREE THAT SITUATION COULD QUICKLY BECOME URGENT. IN VIEW OF NUMBER OF AMERICANS IN KOLWEZI, THEY EXPRESSED PERSONAL HOPE US WOULD JOIN THEIR GOVERNMENTS IN PLANNING.

4. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, POSITION OF MOST AMERICANS IN KOLWEZI APPEARS TO BE SOMEWHAT BETTER THAN OTHER EUROPEANS BY VIRTUE OF AMERICANS' LOCATION A FEW KILOMETERS OUTSIDE OF TOWN AND AWAY FROM FOCUS OF REBEL ATTENTION. THIS OFFERS BETTER CHANCE  
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OF UNILATERAL EVACUATION, WHICH CIS AND MISSION HAVE BEEN WORKING ON. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT FAZ OPERATION MAY PROVE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN BELGIANS AND FRENCH BELIEVE, AT LEAST TO THE POINT OF OFFERING MOMENTARY PERIOD OF RELIEF FROM REBEL CONTROL WHICH COULD BE EXPLOITED TO GET EXPATRIATES OUT. BUT UNLESS PROSPECTS FOR FAZ SUCCESS BECOME CLEARER THAN THEY ARE NOW, I BELIEVE CIS IS PROBABLY JUSTIFIED IN TAKING RISKS INHERENT IN PROCEEDING WITH CURRENT PLANS FOR EVACUATION MAY 17 (SEPTELS).

5. IN VIEW OF UNCERTAINTIES WHICH PERSIST CONCERNING FEASIBILITY OF EVACUATING THESE CIS PERSONNEL, AND FACT THAT EVEN IF EVACUATION FROM CIS BASE CAMP IS SUCCESSFUL THERE WILL BE OTHER AMERICANS LEFT BEHIND INSIDE TOWN PROBABLY AS MANY AS 14. I RECOMMEND THAT WE GIVE PRIORITY TO EXPEDITING OUR CONTINGENCY PLANNING

FOR RESCUE OPERATION FROM OUTSIDE ZAIRE AND THAT IN DOING SO WE COORDINATE CLOSELY WITH BELGIANS AND FRENCH. PRESUMABLY OUR MOST EFFECTIVE ROLE IN ANY JOINT ACTION WOULD BE PRIMARILY IN THE AREA OF TRANSPORT, LOGISTICS AND OTHER SUPPORT.

6. IN APPROACHING THIS QUESTION, WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND  
DIFFERING INTERESTS AND PRIORITIES OF PARTIES INVOLVED.  
WHILE WE ALL AGREE SAFETY OF OUR NATIONALS IS TOP PRIORITY,  
GOB MUST BE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE AT HOME TO TAKE ACTION.  
(AND YET BELGIAN CHARGE PROFESSED NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF  
FAZ PARATROOP OPERATION.) FRENCH AMBASSADOR ALSO ACKNOWLEDGES  
SIMILAR PRESSURES IN FRANCE. BOTH REALIZE POSSIBLE POLITICAL  
AS WELL AS MILITARY COMPLICATIONS WHICH DIRECT INTERVENTION  
COULD ENTAIL, AND THIS IS PROBABLY FACTOR IN THEIR HOPE THAT  
WE WILL GET FULLY INVOLVED. WHILE THESE AND OTHER FACTORS  
SHOULD BE CAREFULLY WEIGHED, I BELIEVE THE SITUATION  
JUSTIFIES URGENT COORDINATED PLANNING FOR POSSIBLE JOINT OPERATION  
FOCUSED STRICTLY ON ASSURING SAFETY OF OUR RESPECTIVE NATIONALS  
NOW FACING A COMMON DANGER.  
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7. COUNTRY TEAM PRINCIPALS, INCLUDING MILITARY, CONCUR.  
CUTLER

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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